

§ 58-34-2. Managing general agents.

(a) As used in this Article:

- (1) "Control", including the terms "controlling", "controlled by", and "under common control", means the direct or indirect possession of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a person, whether through the ownership of voting securities, by contract other than a commercial contract for goods or nonmanagement services, or otherwise, unless the power is the result of an official position with or corporate office held by the person.
- (1a) "Custodial agreement" means any agreement or contract under which any person is delegated authority to safekeep assets of the insurer.
- (2) "Insurer" means a domestic insurer but does not mean a reciprocal regulated under Article 15 of this Chapter.
- (2a) "Management contract" means any agreement or contract under which any person is delegated management duties or control of an insurer or transfers a substantial part of any major function of an insurer, such as adjustment of losses, production of business, investment of assets, or general servicing of the insurer's business.
- (3) "Managing general agent" or "MGA" means any person who manages all or part of the insurance business of an insurer (including the management of a separate division, department, or underwriting office) and acts as an agent for the insurer, whether known as a managing general agent, manager, or other similar term, who, with or without the authority, either separately or together with persons under common control, produces, directly or indirectly, and underwrites an amount of gross direct written premium equal to or more than five percent (5%) of the policyholder surplus as reported in the last annual statement of the insurer in any one quarter or year together with one or more of the following activities related to the business produced:
 - (i) adjusts or pays any claims, or
 - (ii) negotiates reinsurance on behalf of the insurer."MGA" does not mean an employee of the insurer; an underwriting manager who, pursuant to contract, manages all or part of the insurance operations of the insurer, is under common control with the insurer, is subject to Article 19 of this Chapter, and whose compensation is not based on the volume of premiums written; a person who, under Article 15 of this Chapter, is designated and authorized by subscribers as the attorney-in-fact for a reciprocal having authority to obligate them on reciprocal and other insurance contracts; or a U.S. Manager of the United States branch of an alien insurer.
- (4) "Qualified actuary" means a person who meets the standards of a qualified actuary as specified in the NAIC Annual Statement Instructions, as amended or clarified by rule, order, directive, or bulletin of the Department, for the type of insurer for which the MGA is establishing loss reserves.
- (5) "Underwrite" means the authority to accept or reject risk on behalf of the insurer.

(b) Control is presumed to exist if any person directly or indirectly owns, controls, holds with the power to vote, or holds proxies representing ten percent (10%) or more of the voting securities of any other person. The Commissioner may determine, after furnishing all persons in interest notice and opportunity to be heard and making specific findings of fact to support the determination, that control exists in fact, notwithstanding the absence of a

presumption to that effect. The Commissioner may determine upon application that any person does not or will not upon the taking of some proposed action control another person. The Commissioner may prospectively revoke or modify that determination, after the notice and opportunity to be heard, whenever, in the Commissioner's judgment, revocation, or modification is consistent with this Article.

(c) No person shall act as an MGA with respect to risks located in this State for an insurer unless that person is a licensed agent in this State. No person shall act as an MGA representing an insurer with respect to risks located outside of this State unless that person is licensed as an agent in this State; and the license may be a nonresident license. The Commissioner may require a bond in an amount acceptable to the Commissioner for the protection of the insurer. The Commissioner may require the MGA to maintain an errors and omissions policy.

(d) No person acting as an MGA shall place business with an insurer unless there is in force a written contract between the MGA and the insurer that sets forth the responsibilities of each party and, where both parties share responsibility for a particular function, specifies the division of such responsibilities, and that contains the following minimum provisions:

- (1) The insurer may terminate the contract for cause upon written notice to the MGA. The insurer may suspend the underwriting authority of the MGA during the pendency of any dispute regarding the cause for termination.
- (2) The MGA will render accounts to the insurer detailing all transactions and remit all funds due under the contract to the insurer on not less than a monthly basis.
- (3) All funds collected for the account of an insurer will be held by the MGA in a fiduciary capacity in a bank that is a member of the Federal Reserve System. This account shall be used for all payments on behalf of the insurer. The MGA may retain no more than three months estimated claims payments and allocated loss adjustment expenses.
- (4) Separate records of business written by the MGA will be maintained. The insurer shall have access to and right to copy all accounts related to its business in a form usable by the insurer, and the Commissioner shall have access to all books, bank accounts, and records of the MGA in a form usable to the Commissioner. The records shall be retained according to the provisions of 11 NCAC 11C.0105.
- (5) The contract may not be assigned in whole or part by the MGA.
- (6) Appropriate underwriting guidelines, including: the maximum annual premium volume; the basis of the rates to be charged; the types of risks that may be written; maximum limits of liability; applicable exclusions; territorial limitations; policy cancellation provisions; and the maximum policy period. The insurer shall have the right to cancel or nonrenew any policy of insurance subject to applicable laws and rules.
- (7) If the contract permits the MGA to settle claims on behalf of the insurer:
 - a. All claims must be reported to the insurer in a timely manner.
 - b. A copy of the claim file will be sent to the insurer at its request or as soon as it becomes known that the claim: has the potential to exceed an amount determined by the insurer and approved by the Commissioner; involves a coverage dispute; may exceed the MGA's claims settlement authority; is open for more than six months; or is closed by payment of an amount set by the insurer and approved by the Commissioner.

- c. All claim files will be the joint property of the insurer and MGA. However, upon an order of liquidation of the insurer the files shall become the sole property of the insurer or its estate; the MGA shall have reasonable access to and the right to copy the files on a timely basis.
 - d. Any settlement authority granted to the MGA may be terminated for cause upon the insurer's written notice to the MGA or upon the termination of the contract. The insurer may suspend the settlement authority during the pendency of any dispute regarding the cause for termination.
- (8) Where electronic claims files are in existence, the contract must address the timely transmission of the data.
- (9) If the contract provides for a sharing of interim profits by the MGA, and the MGA has the authority to determine the amount of the interim profits by establishing loss reserves, controlling claim payments, or by any other manner, interim profits will not be paid to the MGA until one year after they are earned for property insurance business and five years after they are earned on casualty business and not until the profits have been verified under subsection (f) of this section.
- (10) The MGA shall not:
- a. Bind reinsurance or retrocessions on behalf of the insurer, except that the MGA may bind facultative reinsurance contracts pursuant to obligatory facultative agreements if the contract with the insurer contains reinsurance underwriting guidelines including, for both reinsurance assumed and ceded, a list of reinsurers with which such automatic agreements are in effect, the coverages and amounts or percentages that may be reinsured, and commission schedules;
 - b. Commit the insurer to participate in insurance or reinsurance syndicates;
 - c. Appoint any producer without assuring that the producer is lawfully licensed to transact the type of insurance for which the producer is appointed;
 - d. Without prior approval of the insurer, pay or commit the insurer to pay a claim over a specified amount, net of reinsurance, which shall not exceed one percent (1%) of the insurer's policyholder's surplus as of the preceding December 31;
 - e. Collect any payment from a reinsurer or commit the insurer to any claim settlement with a reinsurer, without the insurer's prior approval. If prior approval is given, a report must be promptly forwarded to the insurer;
 - f. Permit its subproducer to serve on the insurer's board of directors;
 - g. Jointly employ an individual who is employed with the insurer; or
 - h. Appoint a sub-MGA.

(e) An insurer shall have on file by June 1 of each year an audited financial report of each MGA with which it is doing business. The report shall include the opinion of an independent certified public accountant, report the financial position of the MGA as of the most recent year-end and the results of its operations and cash flows, and include appropriate notes to financial statements. The insurer shall provide a copy of the report to the Commissioner within 15 days of receipt by the insurer.

(f) If an MGA establishes loss reserves, the insurer shall provide with its annual statement, in addition to any other required statement of actuarial opinion, the statement of a qualified actuary attesting to the adequacy of loss reserves established on business produced by the MGA. The statement shall comply in all respects with the NAIC Annual Statement Instructions regarding the Statement of Actuarial Opinion.

(g) The insurer shall periodically, at least semiannually, conduct an on-site review of the underwriting and claims processing operations of the MGA. The insurer shall prepare and maintain a written report on the review and make it available to the Commissioner upon the Commissioner's request.

(h) Binding authority for all reinsurance contracts, except those contracts expressly permitted under sub-subdivision (d)(10)a. of this section, or participation in insurance or reinsurance syndicates, shall rest with an officer of the insurer, who shall not be affiliated with the MGA.

(i) Within 15 days after entering into or termination of a contract with an MGA, the insurer shall provide written notification of the appointment or termination to the Commissioner. Notices of appointment of an MGA shall include a copy of the contract, a statement of duties that the MGA is expected to perform on behalf of the insurer, the lines of insurance for which the MGA is to be authorized to act, whether any affiliation exists between the insurer and the MGA and the basis for the affiliation, NAIC biographical affidavit for each officer, director, and each person who owns ten percent (10%) or more of the outstanding voting stock of the MGA, and any other information the Commissioner may request. The Commissioner may prescribe the form to be used for notification of the information required by this item.

(j) The Commissioner shall disapprove any such contract that:

- (1) Does not contain the required contract provisions specified in subsection (d) of this section;
- (2) Subjects the insurer to excessive charges for expenses or commission;
- (3) Vests in the MGA any control over the management of the affairs of the insurer to the exclusion of the board of directors of the insurer;
- (4) Is entered into with any person if the person or its officers and directors are of known bad character or have been affiliated directly or indirectly through ownership, control, management, reinsurance transactions, or other insurance or business relationships with any person known to have been involved in the improper manipulation of assets, accounts, or reinsurance; or
- (5) Is determined by the Commissioner to contain provisions that are not fair and reasonable to the insurer.

Failure of the Commissioner to disapprove any such contract within 30 days after the contract has been filed with the Commissioner constitutes the Commissioner's approval of the contract. An insurer may continue to accept business from the person until the Commissioner disapproves the contract. Any disapproval shall be in writing. The Commissioner may withdraw approval of any contract the Commissioner has previously approved if the Commissioner determines that the basis of the original approval no longer exists or that the contract has, in actual operation, shown itself to be subject to disapproval on any of the grounds in this subsection. If the Commissioner withdraws approval of a contract, the Commissioner shall give the insurer notice of, and written reasons for, the withdrawal of approval. The Commissioner shall grant any party to the contract a hearing upon request.

(k) An insurer shall review its books and records each quarter to determine if any agent has become an MGA. If the insurer determines that an agent has become an MGA, the insurer

shall promptly notify the agent of that determination and the insurer and agent must fully comply with the provisions of this Article within 15 days.

(l) An insurer shall not appoint to its board of directors an officer, director, employee, subagent, or controlling shareholder of its MGAs. This subsection does not apply to relationships governed by Article 19 of this Chapter or, if applicable, G.S. 58-3-165.

(m) The acts of an MGA are considered to be the acts of the insurer on whose behalf it is acting. An MGA may be examined by the Commissioner under G.S. 58-2-131 through G.S. 58-2-134 as if it were an insurer.

(n) If the Commissioner determines that an MGA or any other person has not materially complied with this section or with any rule adopted or order issued under this section, after notice and opportunity to be heard, the Commissioner may order:

- (1) For each separate violation, a civil penalty under the procedures in G.S. 58-2-70(d); or
- (2) Revocation or suspension of the person's license.
- (3) Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 452, s. 47.

If the Commissioner finds that because of a material noncompliance that an insurer has suffered any loss or damage, the Commissioner may maintain a civil action brought by or on behalf of the insurer and its policyholders and creditors for recovery of compensatory damages for the benefit of the insurer and its policyholders and creditors or for other appropriate relief.

(o) Nothing in this section affects the Commissioner's right to impose any other penalties provided for in this Chapter. Nothing in this Article limits or restricts the rights of policyholders, claimants, and creditors.

(p) If an order of rehabilitation or liquidation of the insurer has been entered under Article 30 of this Chapter, and the receiver appointed under that order determines that the MGA or any other person has not materially complied with this section, or any regulation or order promulgated thereunder, and the insurer suffered any loss or damage therefrom, the receiver may maintain a civil action for recovery of damages or other appropriate sanctions for the benefit of the insurer. (1991, c. 681, s. 51; 1993, c. 452, ss. 43-48; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 678, s. 19; 1995, c. 193, s. 34; 1999-132, s. 11.6; 2001-223, ss. 20.1, 20.2.)